Lorna Simpson

Everrrything is Illuminated. By Shana Nys Dambrot
EPISODE

Talking Housing Crisis, High-Speed Rail, Ports & Drought with Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon

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ICONIC RAO’S CELEBRATES 125 YEARS WITH SUNDAY GRAVY

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

opened in 1896, Rao’s restaurant is celebrated as one of the oldest family-owned and operated restaurants in the country, still running its original location in East Harlem. What started out at the turn of the century as a 10 table haunt for Italian immigrants, Rao’s in New York is just about impossible to get into now unless you know somebody with "table rights."

"The restaurant on 114th St. was truly an expression of our household," says fourth-generation owner Frank Pellegrino Jr., who has served in many capacities at the restaurant including sweeping floors, cleaning toilets, bussing tables and washing dishes. "Our households were tenement buildings. There were 10 people living in my grandfather and great-grandparents’ apartment. You know everybody in the neighborhood, so they’re all sort of extended family. Being introduced into that environment as a young boy and growing up in my own family’s household with people constantly coming and going, it was as though we already had a restaurant in our home."

All that changed in the ’70s, when the legendary Mimi Sheraton gave Rao’s “exquisitely simple Italian cooking” three stars in the New York Times and sent the corner joint into the culinary stratosphere. Open only from Monday through Friday for dinner with the same table count of 10 and closing for two weeks in August, your chances of getting a reservation are right up there with winning the lottery unless you know somebody with "table rights." While regulars include actors, politicians and sports figures, your best chance is dropping the name of the neighborhood’s plumber or mailman.

"The one thing my father appreciated was the people who supported this place in the early days," says Pellegrino. "It’s theirs and they will not be displaced. So what my dad managed to do, with as much diplomacy that anybody could muster, was say to those people in that neighborhood at that time – you want this table? This is the night you want to come? That alone filled up 75 percent of our capacity right then and there. The beauty and part of the cache is that these aren’t celebrities or the who’s who. You don’t know if you’re sitting next to the milkman or a titan of business. There might be a rock star at the table next to a plumber or a titan of business. Remove each batch and set aside. Add the tomatoes, increase the heat to high, and bring to a boil. Fill an empty tomato can with water and add to the sauce. Bring the sauce back to a boil.

Return the meat to the pot and season lightly with salt and pepper. Boil for 5 minutes. Reduce to a simmer, partially cover, and cook for 2 hours, stirring frequently, until the meat is pretty much tender and the sauce has reduced by about a half. (If the sauce becomes too thick, add water to the desired consistency.)

About 30 minutes before the end of the cooking time, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat. Add the rigatoni and cook until al dente.

Transfer the meat to a large serving platter. Ladle the sauce over the meat and sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of the parsley and a few basil leaves. Cover lightly with aluminum foil and set aside.

Drain the pasta and return it to the pot over high heat. Add 2 cups of the sauce and stir with a wooden spoon to coat.

Transfer the pasta to a large serving bowl and top with the remaining sauce. Garnish with the basil and remaining 1 tablespoon parsley, and serve the sauce and meat while still hot.

RECIPE: Frankie’s Meatballs

Makes 14 Meatballs

INGREDIENTS:
1 Jar of 32oz Rao’s Homemade Marinara sauce
1 pound lean ground beef
1/2 pound ground veal
1/2 pound ground pork
2 large eggs
2 cups plain breadcrumbs
2 cups cold water
1 cup olive oil
1 garlic clove, smashed
1 cup grated Pecorino Romano cheese
1 garlic clove, minced
Kosher Salt and freshly ground pepper
1 1/2 tablespoons chopped fresh Italian parsley

DIRECTIONS:
- In a large mixing bowl, combine beef, veal & pork. Wearig latex gloves, mix the meat with your hands until it is evenly blended.
- Add the eggs, cheese, parsley, minced garlic salt & pepper. Mix again, until the seasonings are evenly incorporated.
- Add the breadcrumbs and mix in thoroughly. Slightly add the cold water, 1/4 cup at a time, mixing the water in until the mixture is evenly moist throughout. Shape the mixture into 3-inch balls.
- Heat the olive oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat and add the smashed garlic.
- When the garlic begins to sizzle and turn light brown, remove, and discard.
- Carefully add the meatballs to the pan, working in batches to avoid overcrowding the pan.
- When the bottom of each meatball is browned and slightly crisp, about 5 minutes, turn and cook the other side for 5 minutes more.
- Transfer the meatballs to a paper towel-lined plate.
- Add the meatballs to the sauce for about 30 minutes prior to serving. Serve hot or use in your favorite recipe.
Artist Lorna Simpson moves between the micro- and the macro- but her work is always cosmic. Her current exhibition at Hauser & Wirth Los Angeles is titled Everrrything and can rightly be said to encompass a whole universe — several universes actually. As a practical matter, there are sculptures, mixed media paintings, collage suites and moving pictures; materially there are found objects, as well as vernacular and original objects and images, recombined and produced with wood, stone, glass, fiberglass, ink, gesso, screenprinting, pastel, handmade paper, magazine pages, video and activated sound.

Narratively, Simpson tracks operations of mythology, metaphor and memory across small, precious found things, reimagined popular culture icons, gestural portraiture and atmospheric abstract landscapes. Conceptually, she's confronting problematic tropes of art history, cultural power structures and environmental degradation. Knowingly, she's referring to the sheer weight and scope of recent and historical geopolitical health and social traumas — and all the work that remains undone. Coincidentally, a new revised mono-graphic survey encompassing Simpson's work of the last three decades has just been released, following an extensive period of engagement with her own archive, reconsidering her relationship with art history. So yeah, Everrrything really means everything.

The exhibition is heralded by an enigmatic outdoor sculptural installation in the gallery's courtyard; you must pass it to reach the doors to her show. Stacked Stones/Vibrating Cycles is 15 piles of slate-like bluestone, stabilized with painted wood plinths and topped with black obsidian singing bowls for which playing mallets are available at the desk. Both casual and intentional, the stones invite questions. “The stones are from the Northeast corridor,” Simpson tells L.A. Weekly, “like New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut. I wanted to literally bring something that is part of the American landscape to a different part of the landscape.”

They hover in a liminal space between construction and destruction; they are not finished until someone plays the bowls. And they were cleaved by hand, which is part of their beauty but also part of their meaning, as they invite us to ponder questions such as typically gathers and breaks and sorts and stacks and uses these kinds of materials and for what purpose. Are they a barrier or a shelter, a boundary or a placeholder; salvaged from ruins or awaiting their functional destiny? Are they accidents or totems, coded pathfinders, altars? Are they permanent? There’s a mysterious Andy Goldsworthy spirit at play, plus a tousled and energized Carl An-
dre echo, along with a conceptual and economics-inflected story that channels Courbet’s Stone Breakers in its divergent perspective on the value of labor and the landscape.

Once inside, a center line of dozens of collages wraps around the vast perimeter, organized in thematic subsets but all continuing the artist’s ongoing exploration of the collage medium through her recontextualizing of advertising photographs (which are both portraits and socio-cultural fictions) from vintage issues of Ebony and Jet magazines. Into her elegant reconfigurations, Simpson further incorporates found photo booth snaps (which prefigure selfies as they demonstrate both a slight agency on the part of the subject and their staged performative construction of their own image). With motifs culled from photojournalism of the natural world, 19th century celestial maps and scientific textbooks — set amid luxurious backings of indigo-dyed paper and an incandescent blood orange — works such as the Everrrything and Observing the Universe series describe a full society of women in a way that reveals female, and especially Black female, existence as an endless navigation of fiction, projection and aspiration.

“Working the collage is a kind of analog way of playing with the imagination,” Simpson says. The video Walk with me is a simple but effective and affecting film loop that essentially feels like actual footage of her brain when she’s got the scissors out and is ready to play. In the collages she often splices faces, so that what seems like one visage is actually constructed of two. The optical and metaphoric appeal of this surreal nuance is both hypnotic and unsettling.

There’s a hefty sculpture, Hypothetical Physical States, installed inside the galleries containing large landscape paintings. It’s a callback to the stacking sculptures outside, with the same blue painted wood blocks that are used for stabilizing the cairns. But it has since become apparent that this is also the same blue that lights up the painted portraits and dominates the landscape paintings. Rather than participatory bowls, this supports a domed glass bell jar, stilling and containing the energy and the mystery rather than amplifying it.

As the sculptures interrupt your movement through the spaces and engage your body and other senses in the narrative dimensions of the work — and as the collages draw you into closer intimacy with the work through the seduction of their tiny details and pinpoints of light — the large-scale mixed media paintings appear with an operatic sweep, creating moods and atmospheres that you can enter right into, be enveloped by and experience almost from within. Large (about 5 by 8 feet) silkscreen on gessoed fiberglass, their pigmented surface topography contains a wealth of flickering...
detail. You can see the many layers of process technology, the way the silkscreening has of pulling apart like newsprint, the artist’s hand evident in gravitational drips and surface interventions. The landscapes, like the constellation maps in the collages, are from the 19th century; and her appropriation of them speaks to how American mythologizing of the landscape is just as insidious, misogynistic and anti-Black as our commercial culture and art history have been.

Many of these monumental mixed media works had been started in early 2020 or even late 2019 in her New York City studio — a place she was more or less unable to access for an unexpectedly long time, having moved into a second home here in Los Angeles just as the pandemic lockdowns set in. “Going back to New York in September of 2020,” Simpson says, “I had a bunch of work that was in process. Walking back in the studio and with everything that had happened, I changed my relationship to the work, to its interests and even to the kind of day-to-day pace of making it. I really recognized that my entry back into the work was going to be different, and was going to require that I play with the work in a different way in order to move forward.”

Not only because of supply chains, staffing structures and safety concerns but also because of folks’ states of mind, there was what Simpson calls a need for patience, ironically coupled with time pressures that made it impossible to overthink anything. “There was not enough time for that! I just had to go with my gut and ride with my instincts and intuition,” she says. “And I think it’s kind of a gift in a way, because I was like, oh, this is interesting. I can go at things a little differently, with regard to quality of life… and also be affected by what had happened in the interim.”

While Simpson is adamant that this is not work about Covid, the idea that there was enough time for the pieces to begin reflecting the experience — an experience that is still unfolding to this day — is palpable. The large portrait Observer is an ethereal yet statuesque figure whose blue robes are bathed in an aura of light that bursts from within an enveloping shadow, giving the work an already-ancient, ancestral quality. Landscapes like the majestic, institutional scale Reoccurring have a foundation of this same emotional and temporal hybridity, both dissolute and still gathering transformative energy. Its expanse of the now-familiar deep blue is the most cinematic; its rocky shoreline cliffs evoking travel and migration with a prologue of colonialism and kidnapping; at the same time, the woman’s face emerging from within the rock possesses its own powerful ancestral energy, reaching into both the past and the future at the same time.

Storm is a bifurcated vertical scene in which the horizon line divides abstract versions of a gray rainy sky above a radiant blue water and in its center is a partly submerged, swimming and floating woman, seeming to
emerge from the gyre. Pieces of architectural geometry pin the scene's movements in place and keep the viewer at a bit of distance. In Time, this format is reversed — the ground is streaked, the sky luminous, the woman more poised but suspended upside down like a tarot card. She is contained in a square of lapis (the same blue from the portraits, the collage settings and the painted wood braces among the stones), her regal profile almost like what you'd expect to see on money. These works ask questions, Simpson says, about how much control we really have over our lives, our fates and our sanity.

"Those things are present in my mind, you know, one's belief system and in a way what you've known and experienced — it's important to keep that as a constant conversation," Simpson says. "Even if the other person isn't, say, prepared or wanting to engage with that, there is a kind of centering that is important to maintain. I've always been a critic and also skeptical of art history, in terms of its canon, in terms of what it privileges." she says. "I think I've always been aware of that. And even in my own career, I have had to maintain my own language for the way I speak about the work. I call it the Toni Morrison thing. Like, you're asked a question, and you can engage the question, but it doesn't mean you need to answer it. You need to reframe the question, so that your answer makes sense."

Everything is on view at Hauser and Wirth in the downtown arts district through January 9; hauserwirth.com.
Important Facts About DOVATO

This is only a brief summary of important information about DOVATO and does not replace talking to your healthcare provider about your condition and treatment.

What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?

If you have both human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection and Hepatitis B virus (HBV) infection, DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- **Resistant HBV.** Your healthcare provider will test you for HBV infection before you start treatment with DOVATO. If you have HIV-1 and hepatitis B, the HBV can change (mutate) during your treatment with DOVATO and become harder to treat (resistant). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in people who have HIV-1 and HBV infection.

- **Worsening of HBV infection.** If you have HBV infection and take DOVATO, your HBV may get worse (flare-up) if you stop taking DOVATO. A “flare-up” is when your HBV infection suddenly returns in a worse way than before.
  - Do not run out of DOVATO. Refill your prescription or talk to your healthcare provider before your DOVATO is all gone.
  - Do not stop DOVATO without first talking to your healthcare provider.
  - If you stop taking DOVATO, your healthcare provider will need to check your health often and do blood tests regularly for several months to check your liver function and monitor your HBV infection. It may be necessary to give you a medicine to treat hepatitis B. Tell your healthcare provider about any new or unusual symptoms you may have after you stop taking DOVATO.

For more information about side effects, see “What are possible side effects of DOVATO?”

What is DOVATO?

DOVATO is a prescription medicine that is used without other HIV-1 medicines to treat human immunodeficiency virus-1 (HIV-1) infection in adults who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past, or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their healthcare provider determines that they meet certain requirements. HIV-1 is the virus that causes Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). It is not known if DOVATO is safe and effective in children.

Who should not take DOVATO?

Do not take DOVATO if you:

- have ever had an allergic reaction to a medicine that contains dolutegravir or lamivudine.
- take dofetilide. Taking DOVATO and dofetilide can cause side effects that may be serious or life-threatening.

What should I tell my healthcare provider before using DOVATO?

Tell your healthcare provider about all of your medical conditions, including if you:

- have or have had liver problems, including hepatitis B or C infection.
- have kidney problems.
- are pregnant or plan to become pregnant. One of the medicines in DOVATO (dolutegravir) may harm your unborn baby.
  - Your healthcare provider may prescribe a different medicine than DOVATO if you are planning to become pregnant or if pregnancy is confirmed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy.
  - If you can become pregnant, your healthcare provider may perform a pregnancy test before you start treatment with DOVATO.
  - If you can become pregnant, you and your healthcare provider should talk about the use of effective birth control (contraception) during treatment with DOVATO.
  - Tell your healthcare provider right away if you are planning to become pregnant, you become pregnant, or think you may be pregnant during treatment with DOVATO.
- are breastfeeding or plan to breastfeed. Do not breastfeed if you take DOVATO.
  - You should not breastfeed if you have HIV-1 because of the risk of passing HIV-1 to your baby.
  - One of the medicines in DOVATO (lamivudine) passes into your breast milk.
  - Talk with your healthcare provider about the best way to feed your baby.

Tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you take, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, and herbal supplements. Some medicines interact with DOVATO. Keep a list of your medicines and show it to your healthcare provider and pharmacist when you get a new medicine.

- You can ask your healthcare provider or pharmacist for a list of medicines that interact with DOVATO.
- Do not start taking a new medicine without telling your healthcare provider.
- Your healthcare provider can tell you if it is safe to take DOVATO with other medicines.

What are possible side effects of DOVATO?

DOVATO can cause serious side effects, including:

- See “What is the most important information I should know about DOVATO?”
- Allergic reactions. Call your healthcare provider right away if you develop a rash with DOVATO. Stop taking DOVATO and get medical help right away if you develop a rash with any of the following signs or symptoms: fever; generally ill feeling; tiredness; muscle or joint aches; blisters or sores in mouth; blisters or peeling of the skin; redness or swelling of the eyes; swelling of the mouth, face, lips, or tongue; problems breathing.
- Liver problems. People with a history of hepatitis B or C virus may have an increased risk of developing new or worsening changes in certain liver tests during treatment with DOVATO. Liver problems, including liver failure, have also happened in people without a history of liver disease or other risk factors. Your healthcare provider may do blood tests to check your liver.
- Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following signs or symptoms of liver problems: your skin or the white part of your eyes turns yellow (jaundice); dark or “tea-colored” urine, light-colored stools (bowel movements); nausea or vomiting, loss of appetite, and/or pain, aching, or tenderness on the right side of your stomach area.
- Too much lactic acid in your blood (lactic acidosis). Too much lactic acid is a serious medical emergency that can lead to death. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the following symptoms that could be signs of lactic acidosis: feel very weak or tired; unusual (not normal) muscle pain; trouble breathing; stomach pain with nausea and vomiting; feel cold, especially in your arms and legs; feel dizzy or lightheaded; and/or a fast or irregular heartbeat.
- Lactic acidosis can also lead to severe liver problems, which can lead to death. Your liver may become large (hepatomegaly) and you may develop fat in your liver (steatosis). Tell your healthcare provider right away if you get any of the signs or symptoms of liver problems which are listed above under “Liver problems.”
- You may be more likely to get lactic acidosis or severe liver problems if you are female or very overweight (obese).
- Changes in your immune system (Immune Reconstitution Syndrome) can happen when you start taking HIV-1 medicines. Your immune system can get stronger and begin to fight infections that have been hidden in your body for a long time. Tell your healthcare provider right away if you start having new symptoms after you start taking DOVATO.
- The most common side effects of DOVATO include: headache, nausea, diarrhea, trouble sleeping, tiredness, and anxiety.

These are not all the possible side effects of DOVATO. Call your doctor for medical advice about side effects.

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DOVATO is a complete prescription regimen to treat HIV-1 in adults who have not received HIV-1 medicines in the past or to replace their current HIV-1 medicines when their doctor determines they meet certain requirements.

Results may vary.
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Morgan

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Where can I find more information?
• Talk to your healthcare provider or pharmacist.
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March 2021 DVT.6PIL
Green Wednesday is coming up next week, and what better way to celebrate being with friends and family than with some once-a-year sales? If you’re looking for the best Green Wednesday deals, this guide is for you.

What is Green Wednesday? Green Wednesday is a cannabis holiday that is always celebrated the day before Thanksgiving. Green Wednesday is the cannabis consumer’s answer to the surplus of alcohol that usually soaks hometown reunions during the long Thanksgiving weekend.

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Production Directed,
The world knows Dave Gahan as the frontman with Depeche Mode, the British band that from 1980 onwards rode every subculture wave and came out on top. Whether it was post-punk, goth, or new wave, or new romantic, or industrial – it was always ok, if not highly encouraged, to listen to da Mode. The songs are gloriously catchy, the lyrics thoughtful and introspective. They’re dark yet accessible. Experimental. Awesome.

The wonderful dichotomy of Gahan is that he’s always carried the air of someone who’s broody and enigmatic – perhaps thanks to the likes of Robert Smith and Morrissey, who first emerged around the same time during a similar era – and yet most interviews with Gahan reveal a warm, engaging and witty guy. We’re with him to discuss his new album with the Soulsavers, Imposter, and we were instructed not to bring up Depeche Mode. We didn’t have to – once the conversation was in full flow, he went there by himself. Every answer he gave was considered and sharp. Frankly, we were buzzing afterward.

“What [Depeche Mode] set out to do as a band was, we were trying to recreate something in a way from that punk ethic, born out of post-punk – whether it was the Birthday Party, Depeche Mode, the Cure, Echo & the Bunnymen,” Gahan says. “Certain bands came up from that. The Pistols, the Damned, Siouxsie & the Banshees enabled us as creative people to explore these new places with music. It was still about songwriting and getting up on a stage and singing, and producing the sounds in whatever way you could.”

Imposter is a covers album, but it’s unlike most other covers albums. This is no patchwork quilt of random ideas and influences, thrown together. The songs have been written by all manner of different artists from different eras and genres, yet they blend as if composed by Gahan.

“That’s the objective,” he says. “The songs were carefully chosen and sequenced to be able to hear it as a group of songs that could sound like they were from one artist, even though some of those songs are iconically famous – ‘Smile’ and ‘Always on My Mind.’ Rich [Machin] from Soulsavers and myself, we set about making lists of many songs and artists and we started that list at the beginning of 2019, with this idea.”

The album was recorded in November 2018 at Rick Rubin’s Shangri-La studio in Malibu. Rubin, out of town for a month, gave Gahan and the team free rein for that time.

“The idea was to produce a record that would sound like something that we needed to hear,” he says. “It kinda worked out, in a weird way. After that, we mixed the album in London in January, and then we basically went into this new world that we are now living in today. After making this record, it felt a bit like, is it ever gonna really come out? Maybe this is the best-kept secret. Maybe it’s the last thing I’m ever going to do, and wow, thank god I got to do it.”

Thankfully, that’s not the case. The album finally has seen the light of day, nearly two years after it was finished. And it is a fantastic piece of work. The opening track is James Carr’s “The Dark End of the Street,” and the lead-off single is Cat Power’s “Metal Heart.” Elsewhere, Mark Lanegan’s “Strange Religion,” Neil Young’s “A Man Needs a Maid,” PJ Harvey’s “The Desperate Kingdom of Love,” and Bob Dylan’s “Not Dark Yet.” Naturally, there are a ton of songs that didn’t make it onto the record.

“There were a few things that we recorded that actually worked out really well, but they just didn’t fit in the sequencing and there wasn’t any way for it to work like that,” Gahan says. “Rich and I were very conscious of the fact that we wanted this to be an album that was in its traditional form. An album on vinyl, that you would open up that gatefold sleeve and have your sleeve notes, lyrics, and information about how and where the record was made. All that stuff that we grew up doing and I still do actually. So there was only enough room for a certain landscape and this is what we ended up with. The list was long. I think my list was maybe 40 songs or something. It was never going to be that, but there was a Damned song, a Bowie song, a Roxy Music, Nick Cave & the Bad Seeds.”

He’ll have to save those for the deluxe edition or a future box set. Of the songs that he did record, he’s received some stellar feedback.

“We got feedback from PJ Harvey,” Gahan says. “Even from the camps of Neil Young and Bob Dylan, we got the thumbs up. And personally from Mark Lanegan as well. The night that we tracked ‘Strange Religion,’ we sent off a version to Mark to see if he felt we were in the right ballpark, and he got back pretty quickly and was very moved by the song and the performance. He said it was like hearing the song for the first time. Coming from Mark, that was very nice.”

The artist says that he and the Soulsavers picked Shangri-La because first of all, they were looking for a place where all 10 people involved could play together in a live setting.

“Rich popped him off an email asking about the availability of Shangri-La,” Gahan says. “The opportunity came up and I’d also been watching this documentary on things that had been made at Shangri-La, and I was intrigued. I wanted to see the place. It was everything that you imagined it to be. I went deep. It was a place in myself that was very revealing and also informative. Through these songs, this is right where I’m at and supposed to be. That doesn’t often happen in life. It’s like lightning in a bottle – we captured something. I hear it in the record, I really do.”

Gahan commuted there from New York, where he’s been living since 1997 after seven years in Los Angeles.

“It’s been weird in these last couple of years,” he says. “New York became this weird sort of ghost town, to be honest. It was brutal for a few months there, a couple of years ago. To see New York like that, and the rug pulled from under what it is and has been for me which is this place with so much energy but at the same time you can just disappear into. The disappearing part became too much in the last few years. The city seemed to disappear, and all its inhabitants. We stayed there, myself and my wife and my kids. We hunkered down and stayed in the city for that first few months. But I dunno, I still find it a place that I have a hard time leaving. Fortunately, it’s become a place that I can call home.”

With the Cat Power single out, “The Dark End of the Street” is next. After that, there should be some showcase shows from this project, before Gahan returns to his “day job.” But let’s be honest – the guy can do whatever he wants.

Dave Gahan & the Soulsavers’ Imposter is out now.
She’s Crafty
How Craftopia’s Lauren Riihimaki turned DIY creating into an Empire (Q&A)

By Lina Lecaro

Do it yourself. For Canadian-born, L.A.-based content creator, podcaster and Craftopia TV host Lauren Riihimaki, it’s not just a buzz phrase. Also known as LaurDIY, the 28-year-old has run one of YouTube’s top channels for over 8 years now, showcasing her energy, humor and inventive, handmade projects. It’s led to partnerships with brands such as Disney, Procter & Gamble and Starbucks, and earned her a Streamy Award for Best Lifestyle Channel. From apparel and accessories to stationery and jewelry (available at Target and Walmart) Riihimaki has made her mark, and merchandised it too, one glitter ghoststick at a time.

Last year, the craft queen expanded her profile as host and executive producer of HBO Max’s colorful crafting contest for kids. Now in its second season (which just debuted on Oct. 7), the show has moved on to adult “craft-estants” going head to head, and hand to hand, conceiving and building everything from wigs and dog costumes to prosthetics and pumpkins for Halloween (you can watch all four episodes now). The show returns on Nov. 18 with four more episodes themed for the holidays and Christmas.

If she wasn’t busy enough with the show, Riihimaki has also naturally progressed into podcasting with Wild ’Til 9 (with boyfriend Jeremy Lewis), a top-rated comedy pod that was a hit pretty much immediately thanks to her loyal following. So what is the secret to this creative queen’s success? She spills the beads with L.A. Weekly here.

LA WEEKLY: What first inspired you to start crafting?
LAUREN RIIKIMAKI: I was desperately looking for a creative outlet in my freshman year of university. I’ve been crafty from as early on as I can remember and have always found joy in creating something entirely custom. Sports and different hobbies have come and gone throughout my life, but creating in some form or another has stayed consistent. I started a DIY channel to escape the mundane schoolwork I faced and definitely did not expect to find an audience to the extent that I have.

LA WEEKLY: What are your favorite things to make?
LAUREN RIIKIMAKI: Multi-media artwork is top of my list right now. I go through phases of different interests in the DIY space, but being able to combine different mediums onto one canvas has been a freeing process of creation. Beaded bracelets and phone charms that have a “2000’s aesthetic” have been making a huge comeback, so that’s been a fun nostalgic DIY project I’ve also enjoyed.

What do you recommend to fans who might not be crafty but want to make stuff?

There are no rules to crafting! The best part about DIY and creating is that there isn’t a how-to guide on how to build/paint/sew/create something perfect. “Perfect” can be whatever you want it to be and that’s the beauty of literally doing it yourself. I find that new crafters put a lot of pressure on themselves to make picture-perfect Pinterest art. Opt for starting small (or go big, it’s your project!), find some inspiration and go with the flow. You can have as much or as little of a plan as you’d like.

Tell us about your life in L.A. and how it affects your outlook on life and your creations?

I love L.A. Similar to Toronto, I find that L.A. has different pockets of culture and community within the city. The diversity that this creates has always made me feel like there’s room to grow and that I’ll always have the freedom to be entirely myself. Inspiration is everywhere and people from all walks of life come to this city to blossom. I think that translates to any kind of creative process as your exposure to new experiences continues to grow.

How did you translate your love of creating into a successful business in terms of the podcast and your licensing empire?

Licensing was a no-brainer in terms of finding collaborative partners to expand the capabilities of what the brand could grow into. I had incredible partners like Mattel that helped land in-store placement in Targets and Walmart Canada’s across North America and it was a powerful joining of forces. The podcast is a new creative endeavor that I started with my co-host Jeremy Lewis to have authentic and raw long-form conversations. My content has been consistently focused around creativity while pivoting the target age demographic, and a podcast on more mature topics made sense as a next step. It’s an extension of my brand on a new platform that allows for new content and conversation opportunities.

What’s it like having an HBO Max show?
Hosting and executive producing an HBO Max show is truly an unmatched level of excitement. I think a platform like HBO Max is an exciting opportunity for digital creators like myself and the powerhouses of traditional media giants like Warner to come together for a new content experience. The production process has been a whirlwind of fast-paced fun and learning, and it’s interesting to revel in the differences in how content comes together. I’m privileged to have landed a production team that recognizes and capitalizes on the expertise I have around DIY and the digital space.

What can viewers expect as the show evolves with adult competitors?

Higher stakes, bigger projects and a sassier cast! The contestants have DIY/craft backgrounds that have landed them in highly coveted expert jobs in their industries. They craft and create professionally and we’re tasked them with some extreme and extraordinary challenges. It’s also a lot easier to give productive feedback with a little sass to a 35-year-old versus a 13-year-old. It’s wildly inspiring and a whole lot of fun.

Craftopia’s holiday-themed slate of shows premieres on HBO MAX this Thurs., Nov. 18.
CANNABIS

APRIL 19’S AI USES SHULGIN LIBRARY TO IDENTIFY 17 NEW COMPOUNDS

Using the work of MDMA Inventor Alexander Shulgin as a base, April19’s artificial intelligence program identified 17 new psychedelic substances.

BY JIMI DEVINE

Artificial intelligence and psychedelics are two of the most rapidly developing spaces on the globe. We sat down with April19 founder Dr. Suran Goonatilake to talk about the merging of the two.

While we had a lot of fantastic conversations at the largest psychedelic medical conference of all time last week, it’s fair to say we found ourselves picking up our jaws from the floor at Microdose Miami as we learned about April19’s results so far.

But first, just so you can wrap your head around Goonatilake’s work before April19, he is a visiting professor at the University College London Centre for Artificial Intelligence. He has already founded companies in the AI space and had successful exits. Goonatilake got his Ph.D. in machine learning and co-founded Searcshpace for the finance sector. He is the co-editor of the books “Intelligent Systems for Finance and Business” and “Intelligent Hybrid Systems.” He was made an officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2005.

"AI does the work so humans can be on the beach. That's the general gist of it," Goonatilake told L.A. Weekly.

Essentially, April19 taught the AI the work of Alexander Shulgin. Shulgin is the godfather of modern psychedelic science and most notably invented MDMA among an array of other beneficial substances he would sample with his wife before bringing them to dinner parties with friends. April19 told the AI to go nuts. In the process, the AI identified 17 new compounds that have the potential to provide healing benefits.

But it gets crazier.

With the DEA's approval of an increase in the psychedelic research supply chain, there is going to be tons of data for the AI to process over the next 24 months as more psilocybin and MDMA is eventually divided up between researchers across the nation. The AI will be able to use any kind of human data it's able to get its hands on moving forward to make its process even more refined.

"What we'll show today is that you can use the power of evolution. So this is a particular style of AI called evolution machines to discover new psychedelic components," Goonatilake said. "Evolution is arguably the most powerful problem-solving issue we know. That's why we're all here. And that's what we're trying to harness. That's what we have harnessed. So the starting point for the work that we presented today was that the Godfather of psychedelics."

Goonatilake took a minute to go heavy on the Shulgin praise given most of the psychedelic compounds of the last 50 years were discovered by him. He argues the entire industry is built on top of a foundation built by Shulgin.

April19 would start its work with the same four compounds that were known at the start of Shulgin's work. They are DMT, LSD, psilocybin and mescaline.

“We started with those four compounds and then we applied this evolutionary approach called evolution machines, which effectively combines different parts of the molecule into different novel ways,” Goonatilake explains. “And in this case, we can test whether those things are good enough based on how well it fits into your receptor – in this particular case, this receptor – and you'll let this run continuously producing better and better campaigns.”

The AI allows the April19 team to replicate decades’ worth of lab work rapidly. And the machine learning process never stops. As I type this, as you read it, the machine is hunting down new compounds regardless of water and food.

"Then we let it run further. We let it run longer," says Goonatilake. "And then we have 21 AI modules that test whether those molecules are any good or not."

The modules check things like whether the compound will be able to penetrate the blood-brain barrier or be toxic to your heart.

"After all that testing they get to potential candidate molecules that you can take orally as opposed to injections because the injections are a pain in the neck and it looks like a central nervous system drug," Goonatilake notes. "And then we come up with a whole bunch of new molecules which were never known before that we're now ready to license."

So far, 17 molecules have checked all the boxes when reviewed by the AI modules. Each one, separately, is considered very promising for its potential.

And now that Goonatilake and the team at April19 have done the cutting edge part, they can push their work into a more traditional biopharma model to capitalize on it in hopes of eventually getting these compounds to consumers down the line.

The next step for April19? New substances that work on even more receptors in the brain.

"Turn on not one but many other receptors as well,” Goonatilake explains. "And some of them partially, not fully. I think that's going to be one area where future blockbuster drugs are going to be and another area that people are very excited about. It is about psychedelics that are not hallucinogenic.”
Visit www.squirt.org today to join the action
To All Interested Persons:  

MICHAEL BOZZO filed a petition with this court for the change of name described as follows: 

Petitioner's name is: RICHARD MICHAEL BOZZO  

To All interested Persons:  

1. Petitioner: RICHARD MICHAEL BOZZO filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: 

Present name:  

RICHARD MICHAEL BOZZO 

To be restored to:  

Aleksandra Siepielska 

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: 21CHCP02389  

PETITION OF Lorenzo De Leon FOR CHANGE OF NAME  

To All interested Persons:  

1. Petitioner: Lorenzo De Leon filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: 

Present name: Lorenzo De Leon 

To be restored to: Juan Alonzo Angulo Vasquez 

The court may order you to pay all or part of the fees and costs that the court waived for you or the other party. 

The name and address of the court are: Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The name, address, and telephone number of the Petitioner’s attorney or the Petitioner without an attorney, are:  

JORGE A. VELASCO  

13020 Kemberly Street 

Chatsworth, CA 91311 

(818) 478-1043. 

Dated: August 18, 2021. 

Judge Margaret M. Bernal 

Date: December 22nd, 2021 

Hearing indicated below 

Room: 126 

To show cause, if any, why the petition should not be granted. If no written objection is timely filed, the court may grant the petition without a hearing. 

NOTICE OF HEARING 

Date: December 22nd, 2021 

State: Time: 8:30am Dept: 126 

Room: 126 

The address of the court is:  

SUPERIOR COURT OF CALIFORNIA, County of Los Angeles  

12720 Norwalk Blvd. Norwalk, CA 90650. 

MAILING ADDRESS: 

3. A copy of this Order To Show Cause shall be published at least once each week for four consecutive weeks prior to the date set for hearing on the petition in the following newspaper of general circulation, printed in this county: LA Weekly. 

Date: 10/22/21. Judge David D. Gelfond Judge of the Superior Court. 

ORDER TO SHOW CAUSE FOR CHANGE OF NAME CASE NUMBER: 21CHCP02389 

PETITION OF Lorenzo De Leon FOR CHANGE OF NAME 

To All interested Persons: 

1. Petitioner: Lorenzo De Leon filed a petition with this court for a decree changing names as follows: 

Present name: Lorenzo De Leon 

To be restored to: Juan Alonzo Angulo Vasquez 

The court may order you to pay all or part of the fees and costs that the court waived for you or the other party. 

The name and address of the court are: Stanley Mosk Courthouse, Superior Court of California, County of Los Angeles, 111 N. Hill Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012. The name, address, and telephone number of the Petitioner’s attorney or the Petitioner without an attorney, are:  

JORGE A. VELASCO, KERMISCH & PALETZ, LLP  

12711 Ventura Blvd. Suite 200 

Studio City, CA 91604, phone: (818) 478-1043. 

Dated: August 18, 2021. 

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